



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

For immediate release
April 5, 2007

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Protecting the innocent is Central Virginia woman's mission

Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect presents awards to outstanding advocates

Richmond, VA — The Commonwealth recognizes April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, but for attorney **Deborah Tinsley of Louisa County**, protecting children is a year-round mission. The Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect Awards recognize Virginians who have exhibited a strong commitment to advocacy, protection, prevention, treatment and assistance. Tinsley is among this year's honorees.

The Governor's Advisory Board (GAB) presented Certificate of Appreciation Awards to outstanding child advocates at this year's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month Conference in Richmond on April 2. Tinsley, an attorney who works with the departments of social services (DSS) in **Louisa, Goochland and Madison counties**, was one of only six Virginians to receive the award.

"It is an honor and a privilege to recognize the men and women who champion the safety and security of our children," said Governor Timothy Kaine. "Their focus on prevention is especially critical."

Tinsley is a child advocate and attorney serving three DSS offices. She represents the abused and neglected children these agencies serve and works actively in prevention cases. Tinsley has represented more than 500 children throughout her career and dedicates as much time to education and prevention as she does to prosecution and protection. A graduate of the University of Richmond T.C. Williams School of Law, Tinsley also serves as a substitute juvenile and domestic relations court judge in the 16th district.

Other Certificate of Appreciate winners included:

- a Chesapeake attorney who makes himself available 24 hours a day to represent the abused;
- a Norfolk pediatrician who works to raise the standards for other physicians;
- an 80-year-old Virginia Beach woman who has been a child advocate for more than four decades;
- a Prince William social services chief who creates innovative programs to help stop abuse before it happens;

- and a Hampton agency solely dedicated to providing programs that prevent abuse and neglect and strengthen families.

The awards and conference were sponsored by the Virginia Department of Social Services and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia and co-sponsored by the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, the Family and Children's Trust Fund, the Child Abuse Prevention Committee and the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs, consistent with federal and state law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) throughout the state. The VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse, and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities."

For more information, go to:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

<http://www.preventchildabuseva.org>

<http://www.fact.state.va.us>

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/CitizenServices/ConstituentServices/Proclamations/2007/ChildAbusePrevMonth.cfm>

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index.html>

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/prevention_month.cgi

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Attached is a photo of Deborah Tinsley. Interviews and additional photos available upon request. For additional story ideas and for information on how your media outlet can help raise awareness of child abuse, neglect and prevention, please contact Carla Harris, VDSS, (804) 726-7107 or carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov.